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FM AMEMBASSY MAPUTO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8762
INFO RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY PRIORITY
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING PRIORITY 0224
RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN PRIORITY 0053
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 0147
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L MAPUTO 000324

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/19/2018
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [EWWT](#) [MASS](#) [MZ](#) [ZI](#)
SUBJECT: ARMS SHIPMENT FOR ZIMBABWE DENIED ENTRY TO
MOZAMBIQUE

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Todd Chapman, Reasons 1.4(b)&(d)

¶1. (C) After receiving reports that a ship carrying Chinese arms destined for Zimbabwe had left Durban, South Africa and was headed to Mozambique, the Charge contacted the Minister of the Presidency Antonio Sumbana early in the morning today to urge that the GRM not permit the arms to transit Mozambique. Emboffs contacted officials at the interior Ministry and the Port of Maputo, and alerted the independent press. The GRM had evidently been unaware that the ship was coming, but they understood the political sensitivities surrounding the issue and promised to work to resolve the situation quickly. The Charge informed the British High Commissioner who also reached out to government officials and enlisted the support of the German Ambassador to make additional demarches.

¶2. (C) The GRM's initial strategy was to follow the South African example and encourage the dock workers to refuse to offload the arms. Port officials confirmed to us that this strategy was indeed workable and already being discussed by the dock workers. By evening however, press reports indicated that the ship was no longer headed to Mozambique. The Minister of Transportation Paulo Zucula was quoted by Reuters as saying that the GRM had been monitoring the ship's movements, and that its next destination had been registered as Luanda, Angola "because the Mozambican Government would not allow it into Mozambican waters without prior arrangements."

¶3. (C) Minister Sumbana called the Charge this evening to communicate the GRM's official position and the sequence of events. President Guebuza, in Mauritius for the SADC meeting, made the decision late this morning not to allow the Chinese ship to dock in Mozambique. This decision was transmitted to the GRM ministers and to the Chinese Government. The Chinese agreed not to send the ship to Mozambique and turned the ship around to go to another unspecified country. The Minister said "This was not the right time to bring these arms into the region. We have more important things to do than to foment regional instability," he concluded.

¶4. (C) Comment: Mozambique acquitted itself well in dealing with a difficult situation. Turning down both Zimbabwe and China at the same time was not an easy decision for the GRM to make. Nimble work by some Mozambican ministers here in-country, with the President and Foreign Minister in Mauritius, helped resolve this issue with greater efficiency than is usually displayed. Using the press to quickly make known its position on a tricky issue is not

something the GRM has done particularly well in the past, but the newly-appointed Transportation Minister is proving to be more savvy than most. We will find ways to provide positive reinforcement and additional encouragement for positive Mozambican actions such as this one today in support of a peaceful transition in Zimbabwe. End Comment.
Chapman